

NOTES FROM
New Shoreham Town Council – Meeting with Interstate Navigation
Town Hall, Old Town Road
Monday, December 14, 2009
12:15 p.m.

Present: First Warden Kimberley H. Gaffett and Town Council member Peter B. Baute. Representing Interstate Navigation were Ray and Sue Linda, Josh Linda, Janette Centracchio, Bill McCombe and Attorney Mike McElroy. Also present were Town Manager Nancy Dodge, and for the recording of minutes, Deputy Town Clerk Millicent McGinnes. Second Warden Raymond J. Torrey, Council members Richard P. Martin and Kenneth C. Lacoste were absent.

There was no quorum for the meeting. The discussion began at 12:19 p.m.

Attorney Mike McElroy stated that this year ridership is flat compared to last year, down considerably from previous years, and as a result, the company's finances are very tight. He explained that there would be no price increase on tickets this year. Mr. McElroy stated that the check for the landing fee will be sent to the Town by the end of the week.

Josh Linda stated that there would be no major changes to the ferry schedule this year.

From the audience, the following people spoke:

- School Superintendent Bob Hicks thanked Interstate for supporting the school and asked if they would consider tweaking the schedule on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to depart at 2:45 or 3:00 instead of 2:30 to accommodate teacher's schedules.
- Recreation Director Rob Closter also thanked Interstate for their support of the school teams and recreation programs and asked that the departure time on Friday be moved to 12:00 or 12:30 to allow players to stay in school for additional academic time.
- Janet Merritt requested the following items:
 - Add lights to the Block Island parking lot.
 - Extend the life of the commuter ticket to two weeks.
 - Prohibit smoking on the boats.
 - Add boat cancellation information to the website and to local news channels.
 - Tweak the schedule during the two boat Tuesdays and Wednesdays to allow enough time for a Block Islander to do a round trip.
 - Have the Saturday winter boat leave Point Judith earlier.
- Cliff McGinnes, Sr. questioned whether the boat "Anna C" can be run when the "Block Island" boat is not running (instead of the "Carol Jean"), as the Anna C can hold more trucks. Josh Linda responded, stating the Anna C. is not built for winter travel and goes into dry-dock for the winter.
- Bill Wilson questioned what long range plans were being made to accommodate handicapped passengers. Josh Linda noted that all the boats but the "Block Island" cannot be retrofitted for handicapped accessibility. Bill Wilson suggested the company consider offering handicapped customers high-speed tickets at the traditional ferry rate.
- Bill Padien questioned whether freight charges will be increased. It was noted that the fees will remain fixed for the next two years through the end of the current rate plan. Bill Padien stated that the staff at the Block Island freight office does a wonderful job.

Ms. Gaffett stated that she had heard from constituents that:

- The last boat leaving Block Island on Fridays in the winter is 3:30 and tradesmen would prefer a later departure, 4:00 or 4:30.
- During the three week early spring schedule last year the earliest boat left Block Island at 9:30 on Saturdays, whereas an earlier boat is crucial to residents. Jeanette Centracchio responded that this year there will be an 8:15 boat on Monday and Thursday during that time period.

Ms. Gaffett noted improvements that enhanced the terminal areas, such as wreaths, greens, artwork and improved lighting.

Mr. McElroy stated that last year Interstate submitted legislation to increase the cap on the fuel charge that is passed through to customers from \$3.00 to \$5.00, but it did not pass. He further stated that the company would like to submit the legislation again this year. He explained that raising the cap would not affect the base rate, it would just allow the company to directly pass the increased fuel charges on, in case there is another huge spike in fuel prices. He noted that in the next rate filing, the company will increase their base price for fuel. Ms. Gaffett stated that she thought it was a reasonable request and would agenda the item for a future meeting.

Town Manager Dodge questioned what the plans there were for Newport to Block Island high-speed ferry run. Mr. McElroy responded that the company has the certificate permitting the run and they are working on a plan, but have yet to finalize it. They may petition the PUC to allow them to keep the certificate in abeyance until the end of the rate plan.

The Council and Manager thanked the Interstate representatives meeting today and for their service to the island.

Millicent McGinnes
Deputy Town Clerk

Submitted: December 30, 2009
Reviewed: January 4, 2010